A Treatise of the Beliefs of Ahl a-Sunna wal-Jama'a for Beginners

By: Faris bin Falih Al-Khazraji



Translation by:

Essam a-Deen Abu Ahmed Derek Hyun Kim al-Hanbali

This book is an endowment for students of sacred knowledge and is permitted for them to distribute and copy it but not sell it.

I ask from whoever reads it to supplicate for my parents, me, and the believers.

The Author

Faris bin Falih al-Khazraji

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Introduction (for the translation)

All praise belongs to Allah the Lord of the worlds, praising that brings forth His blessing and recompenses His abundance, I testify that there is no god but Allah alone, without any partner for Him, and I testify that Mohammed is His Servant and His Messenger, may Allah send prayers and peace upon him, his people, and his Companions and send peace extensively.

As for what follows…

The good brother Abu Ahmed Derek Hyun Kim asked us to translate the text *A Treatise of the Beliefs of Ahl a-Sunna wal-Jama'a for Beginners* and we agreed to that and authorized him to translate it. May Allah reward our brother with goodness for his efforts and put what he has presented on the scale of his good deeds for very He is *Samee' Mujeeb*.

Written by:

Faris bin Falih al-Khazraji

13/4/ 1444 (Hijri)

7/11/2022

Translator's introduction

All praise belongs to Allah the Lord of the Words who sent His book {so let not your breast be narrow therefrom, that you warn thereby; and a reminder unto the believers} (Quran 7:2) and His Messenger {A Messenger, who recites to you the Ayat of Allah containing clear explanations, that He may take out those who believe and do righteous good deeds, from the darkness to the light} (Quran 65:11) may Allah send prayers and peace upon our Master Muhammad and his people and send peace extensively.

Our beloved Sheikh, His Eminence, Faris bin Falih al-Khazraji al-Hanbali, may Allah preserve him, has authored this beneficial book, *A Treatise of the Beliefs of Ahl a-Sunna wal-Jama'a for Beginners*, illuminating the way of the Pious Predecessors in faith as an endowment for seekers of sacred knowledge. I have tried my best to faithfully translate the book according to the intended meanings of the author. The Quranic verses are from the translation of Sheikh Mubarakpuri, may Allah have mercy on him, while the hadiths (Prophetic narrations) are from the translations on the website Sunnah.com. I have only made minor modifications to these translations, mostly regarding the Divine names and attributes, according to what is permissible and appropriate in the Hanbali aqeeda.

Many thanks to those who have reviewed the text and provided inputs to the first draft of the translation. Any comments on the translation can be sent to publicaadhk@mailfence.com.

The translator

Abu Ahmed Derek Hyun Kim al-Hanbali

13 Rabi' a-Thani 1444 (Hijri)

Corresponding to 7/11/2022

Introduction

All praise belongs to Allah the Lord of the worlds, the one described by the most perfect attributes, I testify that there is no god but Allah alone, without any partner for Him, Glorified is He, the Owner of Majesty, and I testify that Mohammed is His Servant and His Messenger, the Master of the first and last (of creation), may Allah send prayers and peace upon him and his people, and may Allah have *ridha'*[1] with the *Sahaba*[2] and the *Taba'een*,[3] with excellence until the day of judgement.

After numerous inquiries from the students of sacred knowledge regarding a book in the creed of Ahl a-Sunna that would benefit beginners, I have authored for them this summary entitled: *A Treatise of the Beliefs of Ahl a-Sunna wal-Jama'a for Beginners* the creed of the people of *Athar* (reports). I organized it in the form of questions and answers to facilitate understanding and memorization for the beginner.

I ask Allah to accept it from me, for verily He is *Samee' Mujeeb*.[4]

Written by the one in need of his Lord's forgiveness:

Faris bin Falih al-Khazraji

The 8th of the month of Safar 1444 (Hijri)

Corresponding to 4/9/2022

[1] This has the literal meaning of "pleasure."
[2] The Prophetic Companions
[3] The Followers of the Sahaba
[4] This has the literal meaning of "hearing and replying."

Section on clarifying the source of creed and from who it is taken

Question 1: From where is the creed of the Muslim taken?

Answer: From the Quran and the Purified Sunna.

Question 2: From who is the creed taken?

Answer: From the Scholars of the Ahl a-Sunna and al-Athar of the generation of the Scholars of the later period to those of the middle period ending up unto the Imams such as Imams Ahmed, Shafa'i, Malik and Abu Hanifa who took from the *Taba'een* who have taken from the *Sahaba*, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Section on what must be done by the one who wants to enter Islam

Question 3: What does a non-Muslim do if he wants to enter Islam?

Answer: Coming forth with the two testimonies (of faith) with belief in them, adhering to the remaining five pillars if they are specified, and believing in the Messenger ﷺ with regards to what he came with.

The evidence for that is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

مَنْ قَالَ أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لاَ شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَأَنَّ عِيسَى عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَابْنُ أَمَتِهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ وَأَنَّ الْجَنَّةَ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ النَّارَ حَقٌّ أَدْخَلَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ أَىِّ أَبْوَابِ الْجَنَّةِ الثَّمَانِيَةِ شَاءَ

He who said: There is no god but Allah, He is One and there is no associate with Him, that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger, that Issa (Jesus) is the Servant of Allah and the son of His slave-girl and His word which He communicated to Mary and is His Spirit, that Paradise is a fact and Hell is a fact, Allah would make him (he who affirms these truths) enter Paradise through any one of its eight doors which he would like.

Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim

Question 4: If we find a kafir (non-Muslim) praying, then what judgement do me make for him?

Answer: The he’s a Muslim legally, for his coming forth with the two testimonies (of faith), and it’s in the prayer.

Section on knowing Allah the Exalted

Question 5: What is the ruling of knowing Allah the Exalted for the servant?

Answer: It's the first thing of what Allah the Exalted has made obligatory upon His servants- the rational and able to contemplate and reason.

That was quoted from Imam Ahmed in the narration of Hamdan bin Ali in *a-Rawayatayn* by Abi Ya'la.

Question 6: What is the way by which we know Allah the Exalted?

Answer: The way of contemplation and reasoning for knowledge of Allah the Exalted is by the Divine legislation (Sharia) and not by intellect with manifest evidence and overwhelming proof: which is ourselves, the heavens and the earth, and all they contain.

Regarding the evidence for the obligation to contemplate, it's by way of Divine legislation, and of that:

The statement of Allah the Exalted:

قُلِ انظُرُوا مَاذَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ وَمَا تُغْنِي الْآيَاتُ وَالنُّذُرُ عَن قَوْمٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ

Say: "Behold all that is in the heavens and the earth." But neither Ayat (signs) nor warners benefit those who do not believe. (Quran 10:101)

The statement of Allah the Exalted:

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِم ۗ مَّا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ

Do they not reflect upon themselves, thinking and pondering how Allah *khalaqa*[5] various things in the upper and lower realms and in the space between, realizing that this was not created in jest or in vain, but in truth? (Quran 30:8)

[5] This has the literal meaning of "to create."

(Chapter- Attributes of Allah)

Section of the attributes of Allah the Exalted

Question 7: What is it that's obligatory upon the Muslim to believe regarding the attributes of Allah the Exalted.

Answer: To believe that the attributes of Allah the Exalted are pre-existent, and that He the Exalted is One in His attributes. No one resembles Him in His attributes and He's distinct from His creation.

Section on the attribute of *al-Wahdaaniyya*

Question 8: What's the meaning of the *tawheed* of Allah, Glorified is He?

Answer: The *tawheed* of Allah the Exalted is believing that Allah the Exalted is One Alone, Absolutely Unique and free of any needs while everything else is in need of Him, {He begets not, nor was He begotten, and there is none comparable to Him}. No one resembles Him in His essence, nor His attributes, nor His actions.

Allah, Glorified is He, is One, Absolutely Unique, who is ever alone without a partner.

The evidence- His statement, the Exalted:

إِنَّمَا اللَّهُ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ

For Allah is (the only) One God. (Quran 4:171)

And His statement, the Exalted:

لِّمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ۖ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ

Whose is the kingdom this Day? It is Allah's, the One, the Irresistible! (Quran 40:16)

So, he who believes that Allah, Glorified is He, is a body of bodies, or gives Him the reality of a body in formation and movement; then he is a *kafir* because he isn't a knower of Allah, Almighty and Majestic, because it's impossible to describe Allah, Glorified be He, with these attributes, and if he doesn't know Allah, Glorified is He, then he must be a *kafir*.

Section on the attribute of *al-'Ilm*[6]

Question 9: What is obligatory upon the Muslim to believe regarding the attribute of *al-'Ilm*?

Answer: It is obligatory upon the Muslim to believe that He the Exalted is *'alam*[7] through one, pre-existent, ever-lasting *'ilm*, encompassing everything that is known, and it doesn't resemble the knowledge of created beings.

The evidence for that:

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِۦ عِلْمًا

He *ya'lam*[8] what happens to them, and what will happen to them, but they will never encompass anything of His *'ilm*. (Quran 20:110)

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ ٱللَّطِيفُ ٱلْخَبِيرُ

Should not He Who has created know And He is Al-Lateef Al-Khabeer. (Quran 67:14)

يَعْلَمُ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌۢ بِذَاتِ ٱلصُّدُورِ

He *ya'lam* what is in the heavens and on earth, and He *ya'lam* what you conceal and what you reveal. And Allah is the *'aleem*[9] of what is in the breasts. (Quran 64:4)

[6] The word *'ilm* has a literal meaning of "knowledge" in the Arabic language, however the *'ilm* of Allah is something, as the author said, "doesn't resemble the knowledge of created beings."
[7] This has the literal meaning of "the one knowledgeable."
[8] This literally means "to know."
[9] This literally means "knowledgeable."

Section on the attribute of *al-Qudra*[10]

Question 10: What is obligatory upon the Muslim to believe regarding the attribute of *al-qudra*?

Answer: It's obligatory upon the Muslim to believe that He the Exalted is *Qadir*[11] through one, pre-existent *qudra*.

The evidence is that He, Glorified be He, said:

وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

And He is *qadeer*[12] to do all things. (Quran 67:1)

And He, the Exalted, said:

قُلْ هُوَ ٱلْقَادِرُ

Say: "He is *al-Qadir*[13]…" (Quran 6:65)

[10] The word *qudra* has a literal meaning of "capability."
[11] This has the literal meaning of "the one capable."
[12] This literally means "to be able."
[13] This literally means "the one who is able."

Section on the attribute of *al-Irada*[14]

Question 11: What is obligatory upon the Muslim to believe regarding the attribute of *al-irada*?

Answer: It is obligatory upon the Muslim to believe that He the Exalted is *Mureed*[15] through one *irada*.

The evidence is His, the Exalted, statement:

إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَىْءٍ إِذَآ أَرَدْنَٰهُ أَن نَّقُولَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ

Verily, Our Word to a thing when We *iradna*[16] it, is only that We say unto it: "Be!" - and it is. (Quran 16:40)

And His, the Exalted, statement:

يُرِيدُ ٱللَّهُ بِكُمُ ٱلْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ ٱلْعُسْرَ

Allah *yureed*[17] for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you. (Quran 2:185)

[14] The word *irada* has a literal meaning of "will."
[15] This has the literal meaning of "the one who wills."
[16] This literally means "intend."
[17] This has the literal meaning of "to want."

Section on the attribute of *al-Haya*[18]

Question 12: What is obligatory upon the Muslim to believe regarding the attribute of *al-haya*?

Answer: It is obligatory upon the Muslim to believe that He the Exalted is *hayy*[19] through one *haya,* ever-present, pre-existent.

The evidence is His, Glorified is He, statement:

ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ٱلْحَىُّ ٱلْقَيُّومُ

Allah, there is no god but Him, al-Hayy[20] al-Qayyoom.[21] (Quran 2:255)

And His, the Exalted, statement:

هُوَ ٱلْحَىُّ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

He is al-Hayy, there is no god but Him. (Quran 40:65)

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[18] The word *haya* has a literal meaning of "life."
[19] This has the literal meaning of "living."
[20] This has the literal meaning of "the Ever-Living."
[21] This has the literal meaning of "the Sustainer."

Section on the attribute of *a-Sama'*[22] and *al-Basr*[23]

Question 13: What is obligatory upon the Muslim to believe regarding the attribute of *a-Sama'* and *al-Basr*?

Answer: It's obligatory upon the Muslim to believe that He the Exalted is *sameea'*[24] *baseer*[25] through *sama'* and *basr,* pre-existent, pertaining to everything heard and seen, and they don't resemble the hearing and seeing of created things.

The evidence for establishing these two attributes includes:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَىْءٌ ۖ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ

There is nothing like unto Him, He's *a-Samee' al-Baseer*. (Quran 42:11)

إِنَّنِى مَعَكُمَآ أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَىٰ

He (Allah) said: "Fear not, verily, I am with you both, I *asma'* and *ara*.[26]" (Quran 20:46)

أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَرَىٰ

Does he not know that Allah *yara*?[27] (Quran 96:14)

قَدْ سَمِعَ ٱللَّهُ قَوْلَ ٱلَّتِى تُجَٰدِلُكَ فِى زَوْجِهَا

Indeed, Allah has *sama'*[28] the statement of her that disputes with you concerning her husband. (Quran 58:1)

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[22] The word *sama* has a literal meaning of "hearing."
[23] The word *basr* has a literal meaning of "seeing."
[24] This has the literal meaning of "hearing."
[25] This has the literal meaning of "seeing."
[26] This has the literal meaning of "I hear and see."
[27] This has the literal meaning of "sees."
[28] This has the literal meaning of "heard."

Section on the attribute of *al-Kalam*[29]

Question 14: What is obligatory upon the Muslim to believe regarding the attribute of *al-kalam* of the Lord of the worlds?

Answer: That He, the Exalted, is *mutakallim*[30] with *kalam*[31] (that is) pre-existent, of (His) essence, existing, not created, or brought into existence, or (newly) occurring, and without a likeness, resemblance, or defined modality.

As for it being the *kalam* of Allah the Exalted, the evidence for that is His statement:

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ٱسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلَٰمَ ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُۥ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ

And if anyone of the *mushrikeen* (polytheists) seeks your protection then grant him protection so that he may hear the *kalam* of Allah (the Qur'an) and then escort him to where he can be secure, that is because they are men who know not. (Quran 9:6)

As for the *kalam* of Allah being pre-existent and not (newly) occurring; its meaning is that the *kalam* of Allah is pre-existent, is that nothing can exist without it.

As for it being uncreated, the evidence for that is His, the Exalted, statement:

إِنَّمَآ أَمْرُهُۥٓ إِذَآ أَرَادَ شَيْـًٔا أَن يَقُولَ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ

Verily, His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be!" -- and it is![32] (Quran 16:40)

[29] The word *kalam* has a literal meaning of “speech.”
[30] This has the literal meaning of “speaking.”
[31] This has the literal meaning of “speech.”
[32] In this translation, I’ve accepted the literal meanings of “intend” and “say” as they correspond to the general meanings conveyed in the verse, but the actual reality of those actions with regards to Allah, only He knows.

Section on the Quran being the *kalam* of Allah the Exalted

The Quran is the *kalam* of Allah, His *Wahee*[33] and His *Tanzeel*,[34] a miracle in itself for all of creation, it is not created, nor does it dwell in anything, and it is impossible to produce some of its verses. Whoever says that the Quran is created, or brought into being, or (newly) occurring, or has remained indecisive (in the matter) due to doubt, or claims that someone can produce its likeness, (then they) have disbelieved.

The evidence is His, the Exalted, statement:

وَإِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ٱسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلَٰمَ ٱللَّهِ

And if anyone of the *mushrikeen* (polytheists) seeks your protection then grant him protection so that he may hear the *kalam* of Allah (the Qur'an). (Quran 9:6)

And His statement:

سَيَقُولُ ٱلْمُخَلَّفُونَ إِذَا ٱنطَلَقْتُمْ إِلَىٰ مَغَانِمَ لِتَأْخُذُوهَا ذَرُونَا نَتَّبِعْكُمْ ۖ يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُبَدِّلُوا۟ كَلَٰمَ ٱللَّهِ

Those who lagged behind will say, when you set forth to take the spoils, "Allow us to follow you." They want to change Allah's *kalam*. (Quran 48:15)

[33] This has the approximate meaning of revelation.
[34] That which is literally “sent down.”

Section on the *kalam* of Allah the Exalted being *harf*[35] and *sawt*[36]

The evidence regarding that is:

ما روى عبد الله بن مسعود رضي الله عنه، عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال:إِذَا تَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ بِالْوَحْيِ سَمِعَ صَوْتَهُ أَهْلُ السَّمَاءِ

What was narrated by Abdullah bin Mas'ood, *radhi Allah 'anhu*, that the Prophet ﷺ said: "If Allah *takalama*[37] by *wahee*, the people of the heavens hear His *sawt*.[38]

And (what was narrated) on the authority of Abi Huraira, *radhi Allah 'anhu*, that the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ الأَمْرَ فِي السَّمَاءِ ضَرَبَتِ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ بِأَجْنِحَتِهَا خُضْعَانًا لِقَوْلِهِ كَأَنَّهُ سِلْسِلَةٌ عَلَى صَفْوَانٍ

"When Allah decrees some order in the heaven, the angels flutter their wings indicating complete surrender to His saying which sounds like chains being dragged on rock." Narrated by al-Bukhari

Section (of additional details of Allah)

It is obligatory to affirm that He, Glorified be He the Exalted, is distinct from His creation, for He existed before space existed, and then He created space while existing before its creation. He can't be known through the senses nor compared to people. He is *al-Ghani* (eternally and absolutely, self-sufficient) from everything, and nothing can be independent of Him. Nothing resembles Him nor does He resemble anything.

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[35] The word "*huroof*" is the plural of "*harf*" and has the literal meaning of "letters."
[36] The word "*sawt*" has the literal meaning of "sound" or "voice."
[37] This has the literal meaning of "speaks."
[38] Narrated by Imam Ahmed and in The Book of the Sunna by Abdullah bin Ahmed.

Section on the ruling of *a-ta'weel* (speculative interpretation)

Question 15: What is the ruling of making speculative interpretation of the verses of the attributes?

Answer: Its ruling is prohibition, except by that which there is evidence reported from a hadith or a statement of an esteemed *Sahabi*.[39] Whatever comes to mind, or the imagination conceives, is other than *Dhee al-Ikram wa al-Jalal*.[40]

So, it's prohibited to make speculative interpretation of the verses of the attributes, or to explain them, and we entrust their meaning to the One who said them, such as the verse of the *al-Istawa*,[41] and it's His statement:

ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ عَلَى ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱسْتَوَىٰ

A-Rahman[42] made *istawa* on the Throne. (Quran 20:5)

And the hadith of *a-Nuzool* which is his ﷺ statement:

يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى فِي كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا، حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الآخِرُ، فَيَقُولُ: مَنْ يَدْعُونِي فَأَسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ مَنْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأُعْطِيَهُ مَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُنِي فَأَغْفِرَ لَهُ.

"Our Lord, the Blessed and Exalted, *yanzil*[43] to the lowest heaven every night when a third of the night remains. He says, 'Who is calling on Me so that I can answer him? Who is asking Me for something so that I can give to him? Who is asking Me for forgiveness so that I can forgive him?'"

Narrated by al-Bukhari

And (there is evidence) other than that from the verses of the attributes.

So, it is not permissible to speculatively interpret them except for what is emanating from the Prophet ﷺ or some of the *Sahaba*.[44] This is the way of all the *Selef*,[45] so we do not say of exaltation (of the meaning) like the *Mu'attala* (those who negate meaning of the attributes), rather we affirm (them). We do not distprt, nor describe (them), and we don't give (them) a modality. Speaking of the attributes is an extension of speaking of the (Divine) essence. Our way is truth between two falsehoods, guidance

[39] A companion of the Prophet ﷺ.
[40] This is a name of Allah.
[41] This has the literal meaning of "rising."
[42] This is a name of Allah.
[43] This has the literal meaning of "descend."
[44] This is the plural for "Companion."
[45] This refers to the people of the first three generations, 300 years, after the death of the Prophet ﷺ.

between two misguidances,[46] which is to affirm the names and the attributes while negating resemblance and limbs.

[46] The two extremes are negating the attributes either absolutely or changing them through speculative interpretation, while on the other extreme, falling into anthropomorphism. May Allah protect us from these misguidances.

Section on the actions (of people)

Question 16: What's the ruling on the actions of the servants?[47]

Answer: The actions of the servants are created by Allah the Exalted, the good of them and the evil of them.

Question 17: Are the actions of the servants a result of them?

Answer: All the actions of the servants are a result of them. The servant is the one who chooses to pursue obedience or pursue sinful acts. He is not coerced nor forced.

The evidence for that is what Allah, the Exalted, said:

جَزَآءً بِمَا كَانُواْ يَعْمَلُونَ

(Paradise al-Janna is) a reward for what they used to do. (Quran 32:17)

The Exalted said:

بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ

(The reception in Paradise al-Janna is) for you persevered in patience. (Quran 13:24)

He, Glorified is He, said:

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِى سَقَرَ, قَالُواْ لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ ٱلْمُصَلِّينَ, وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ ٱلْمِسْكِينَ

(The people of Paradise al-Janna will ask the people of Hell): "What has caused you to enter Hell?" hey will say: "We were not of those who used to offer the prayer, nor did we feed the poor." (Quran 74:42-44)

The Exalted said:

هَٰذِهِ ٱلنَّارُ ٱلَّتِى كُنتُم بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ

This is the Fire (of Hell) which you used to deny. (Quran 52:14)

[47] The word "servants" means people.

The Exalted said:

ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاكَ

That (burning torment) is because of what your hands have sent forth. (Quran 22:10)

(And the evidence is) other than that from the verses (of the Quran).

Section on Allah, the Exalted, does to His creation what He wants

The Exalted, Glorified is He, has the right to torment and punish creation without indictment, and He may do with His creation what He wants. All of that is good (and fair). He may advance reward and punishment and delay them. (He may) pardon a sinful Muslim even if he didn't repent and a kafir if he submits (to Islam). His creation has no right over Him nor must He do what's best for them. The sound mind corresponds with the monotheistic Sharia and does not contradict it.

The evidence for all of this is:

يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَآءُ

He punishes who He wants and forgives who He wants. (Quran 3:129)

He Has the right to do with His creation what He wants.

The evidence is the statement of Allah the Exalted:

لَا يُسْـَٔلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْـَٔلُونَ

He cannot be questioned as to what He does, while they will be questioned. (Quran 21:23)

Allah is *a-Razaq*[48] of halal[49] and haram.[50] He guides who He wills and leads astray who He wants.

The evidence that Allah gives provision of halal and haram is His, the Exalted, statement:

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلرَّزَّاقُ ذُو ٱلْقُوَّةِ ٱلْمَتِينُ

Verily, Allah is the a-*Razaq*, Owner of power, *al-Mateen*.[51] (Quran 51:58)

Sustenance is attributed to Him, Glorified is He. It is that which is a suitable as a source of nutrition and strength to bodies, and it may be from halal or haram.

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[48] This name of Allah has the literal meaning of the "Provider of Sustenance."
[49] The permissible according to the Sharia.
[50] The forbidden according to the Sharia.
[51] This name of Allah has the literal meaning of the "Most Strong."

Section on what is obligatory and recommended for a Muslim (to do)

Question 18: What is the obligation of a Muslim towards the rulings of Allah the Exalted and His Messenger ﷺ?

Answer: The obligatory commands of Allah the Exalted are required to be carried out and the recommended commands are recommended to be performed.

The evidence for this is the statement of Allah the Exalted:

قُلْ أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلرَّسُولَ ۖ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْاْ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ

Say: "Obey Allah and the Messenger." But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbelievers. (Quran 3:32).

And the statement of Allah the Exalted:

وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

And obey Allah and the Messenger that you may obtain mercy. (Quran 3:132)

Question 19: Is the obedient servant entitled to reward from Allah?

Answer: The obedient one isn’t entitled to reward from Allah but rather deserves blessing and grace (not to be punished), nor does the disobedient deserve punishment. Rather the obedient is rewarded by to His grace and the disobedient is punished according to His justice.

(The evidence for that is) the hadith of Mu’adh that is mentioned in the two Saheeh (authentic) collections on the authority of Anas that Mu’adh said:

عَنْ مُعَاذِ بْنِ جَبَلٍ، قَالَ كُنْتُ رِدْفَ النَّبِيِّ صلى الله عليه وسلم لَيْسَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُ إِلاَّ مُؤْخِرَةُ الرَّحْلِ فَقَالَ " يَا مُعَاذَ بْنَ جَبَلٍ " . قُلْتُ لَبَّيْكَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ . ثُمَّ سَارَ سَاعَةً ثُمَّ قَالَ " يَا مُعَاذَ بْنَ جَبَلٍ " . قُلْتُ لَبَّيْكَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ . ثُمَّ سَارَ سَاعَةً ثُمَّ قَالَ " يَا مُعَاذَ بْنَ جَبَلٍ " . قُلْتُ لَبَّيْكَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ . قَالَ " هَلْ تَدْرِي مَا حَقُّ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ " . قَالَ قُلْتُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ . قَالَ " فَإِنَّ حَقَّ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ أَنْ يَعْبُدُوهُ وَلاَ يُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا " . ثُمَّ سَارَ سَاعَةً ثُمَّ قَالَ " يَا مُعَاذَ بْنَ جَبَلٍ " . قُلْتُ لَبَّيْكَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَسَعْدَيْكَ . قَالَ " هَلْ تَدْرِي مَا حَقُّ الْعِبَادِ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِذَا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ " . قَالَ قُلْتُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ . قَالَ " أَنْ لاَ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ " .

It is narrated on the authority of Mu'adh b. Jabal: I was riding behind the Prophet (ﷺ) and there was nothing between him and me but the rear part of the saddle, when he said: Mu'adh b. Jabal: To which I replied: At your beck and call, and at your pleasure, Messenger of Allah! He moved along for a few minutes, when again he said: Mu'adh b. Jabal: To which I replied: At your beck and call, and at your pleasure, Messenger of Allah! He then again moved along for a few minutes and said: Mu'adh b. Jabal: To which I replied. At your beck and call, and at your pleasure. Messenger of Allah He, (the Holy Prophet) said: Do you know what right has Allah upon His servants? I said: Allah and His Messenger

know best. He (the Holy Prophet) said: Verily the right of Allah over His servants is that they should worship Him, not associating anything with Him. He (the Holy Prophet) with Mu'adh behind him, moved along for a few minutes and said: Mu'adh b. Jabal: To which I replied: At your beck and call, and at your pleasure, Messenger of Allah! He (the Holy Prophet) said: Do you know what rights have servants upon Allah in case they do it (i. e. they worship Allah without associating anything with Him)? I (Mu'adh b. Jabal) replied: Allah and His Messenger know best. (Upon this) he (the Holy Prophet) remarked: That He would not torment them (with the fire of Hell).[52]

Question 20: What is the ruling of asserting that a specific obedient servant will be in Paradise al-Janna and that a specific sinner will be in the hellfire?

Answer: We do not assert with certainty that a specific obedient will be in Paradise or that a specific disobedient will be in the Hellfire, rather we hope and fear (for each one respectively), except he who the Prophet ﷺ has given witness for them, such as the ten Companions given the glad tidings of Paradise al-Janna just as the Prophet ﷺ gave witness for them when he said:

أبو بَكْرٍ في الجنَّةِ ، وعمرُ في الجنَّةِ ، وعُثمانُ في الجنَّةِ ، وعليٌّ في الجنَّةِ ، وطَلحةُ في الجنَّةِ والزُّبَيْرُ في الجنَّةِ ، وعبدُ الرَّحمنِ بنُ عوفٍ في الجنَّةِ ، وسعدُ بنُ أبي وقَّاصٍ في الجنَّةِ ، وسَعيدُ بنُ زيدٍ في الجنَّةِ ، وأبو عُبَيْدةَ بنُ الجرَّاحِ في الجنَّةِ .

Abu Bakr will be in Paradise; 'Umar will be in Paradise; 'Uthman will be in Paradise; 'Ali will be in Paradise; Talhah will be in Paradise; Zubair will be in Paradise; 'Abdur-Rahman bin ‘Awf will be in Paradise; Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas will be in Paradise; Sa’eed bin Zaid will be in Paradise; and Abu ‘Ubayda bin al-Jarrah will be in Paradise.[53]

(Hence) everyone the Prophet ﷺ gave witness of Paradise al-Janna, we (also) bear witness to them of it, according to his statement:

الحَسَنُ والحُسَيْنُ سَيِّدَا شَبابِ أهلِ الجنةِ

Hasan and Husain will be the leaders of the youth of Paradise.[54]

And regarding Thabit bin Qais:

إنه من أهل الجنة

Verily he is from the people of Paradise.

(See) *Fada’il a-Sahaba* (The Virtues of the Companions) by Imam Ahmed.

[52] This hadith is narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim. The wording here if from Muslim.
[53] This hadith is narrated by a-Tirmidhi and others.
[54] This hadith is narrated by a-Tirmidhi and others.

Section on knowing belief and disbelief

Question 21: What is belief?

Answer: Belief is a covenant in the heart, a statement by the tongue, and an act of the limbs.

Question 22: Does belief increase and decrease?

Answer: It increases with obedience (to Allah) and decreases by disobedience (to Allah). It is strengthened by knowledge and is weakened by ignorance, heedlessness, and neglect.

Question 23: What is the ruling on saying "I'm a *Mumin*[55] *in sha' Allah*[56] the Exalted"

Answer: It's recommended to say "*in sha' Allah*," not from doubting the current state but rather doubting the outcome, or in the acceptance of deeds, or fear of a shortcoming, or self-condemnation.

The Sunna refers to that, and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

الإيمان بضع وسبعون، أو بضع وستون شعبة: فأفضلها قول لا إله إلا الله، وأدناها إماطة الأذى عن الطريق

Faith has over seventy branches - or over sixty branches - the uppermost of which is the declaration: 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah' and the least of which is the removal of harmful object from the road.

Narrated by al-Bukhari (and Muslim)

Shaheen bin Samayda' said I heard Abu Abdullah say: Belief is a statement and deeds, a statement of the tongue, and actions of the limbs.[57]

Question 24: What is kufr (disbelief)?

Answer: Kufr is denial of what Islam cannot be complete without it.[58] The Muslim takes after his parents (in faith). It is required that he utter the two testimonies (of faith) if he becomes physically mature if he never said them (previously).

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[55] This means "believer."
[56] This means "Allah willing"
[57] See *Tabaqat al-Hanabila* (461/1).
[58] Like belief in Allah, the Prophethood of Mohammed ﷺ, the obligation of prayer, etc.

Question 25: What's the ruling of praising a hypocrite and describing him with title of a devout and religious man and faithful to Allah?

Answer: It is not said regarding a *fasiq* (immoral person): (he is) religious, devout, sincere and a *Wali* (Friend) of Allah.

The evidence for that is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

لا تقولوا للمنافق سيد، فإنه إن يكن سيدًا، فقد أسخطتم ربكم عز وجل

Do not address a hypocrite with the title of chief, (or similar titles of respect) for even if he deserves this title, you will invite Allah's Wrath by using it for him.

Narrated by Abu Dawood

Section on Repentance and the Definition of a Major Sin

Question 26: What is the ruling of repentance?

Answer: Repentance is obligatory immediately from every sin.

The evidence is His, the Exalted, Statement:

وَتُوبُوٓاْ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُفۡلِحُونَ

And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful. (Quran 24:31)

And His, the Exalted, statement:

وَيَٰقَوۡمِ ٱسۡتَغۡفِرُواْ رَبَّكُمۡ ثُمَّ تُوبُوٓاْ إِلَيۡهِ يُرۡسِلِ ٱلسَّمَآءَ عَلَيۡكُم مِّدۡرَارًا وَيَزِدۡكُمۡ قُوَّةً إِلَىٰ قُوَّتِكُمۡ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوۡاْ مُجۡرِمِينَ

"And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him, He will send you (from the sky) abundant rain, and add strength to your strength, so do not turn away as criminals." (Quran 11:52)

Question 27: What is the definition of a major sin?

Answer: A major sin according to Ahmed is what has a punishment in this world or a promise of punishment in the Hereafter.

Question 28: What is the ruling of believing in al-Qadha'[59] and al-Qadar?[60]

Answer: It is obligatory to believe in al-Qadha' and al-Qadar, its good and evil.

The evidence for that is His, the Exalted, statement:

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيۡءٍ خَلَقۡنَٰهُ بِقَدَرٍ

Verily, We have created all things with Qadar. (Quran 54:49)

And His, the Exalted, statement:

مَآ أَصَابَ مِن مُّصِيبَةٍ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَلَا فِيٓ أَنفُسِكُمۡ إِلَّا فِي كِتَٰبٍ مِّن قَبۡلِ أَن نَّبۡرَأَهَآۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ
لِّكَيۡلَا تَأۡسَوۡاْ عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمۡ وَلَا تَفۡرَحُواْ بِمَآ ءَاتَىٰكُمۡ

[59] This is the decree of Allah.
[60] This is establishing the decree of Allah.

No calamity occurs in the earth nor in yourselves, but it is inscribed in the Book of Decrees before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah. In order that you may not grieve at the things over that you fail to get, nor rejoice over that which has been given to you. (Quran 57:22-23)

And from the Sunna, on the authority of Abdullah (bin Masood): Allah's Messenger ﷺ the true and truly inspired, narrated to us, "The creation of every one of you starts with the process of collecting the material for his body within forty days and forty nights in the womb of his mother. Then he becomes a clot of thick blood for a similar period (40 days) and then he becomes like a piece of flesh for a similar period. Then an angel is sent to him (by Allah) and the angel is allowed (ordered) to write four things; his livelihood, his (date of) death, his deeds, and whether he will be a wretched one or a blessed one (in the Hereafter) and then the soul is breathed into him. So one of you may do (good) deeds characteristic of the people of Paradise so much that there is nothing except a cubit between him and Paradise but then what has been written for him decides his behavior and he starts doing (evil) deeds characteristic of the people of Hell (Fire) and (ultimately) enters Hell (Fire); and one of you may do (evil) deeds characteristic of the people of Hell (Fire) so much so that there is nothing except a cubit between him and Hell (Fire), then what has been written for him decides his behavior and he starts doing (good) deeds characteristic of the people of Paradise and ultimately) enters Paradise."

Narrated by al-Bukhari

Question 29: Allah has decreed disobedience and what's disliked, and He made it possible, and He wrote it upon His creation, so does He order them to do that?

Answer: Allah has decreed disobedience and what is disliked, and He made it possible, and He wrote it upon His creation on the Preserved Tablet. He did not command them to do it and didn't force them to do that, but rather He forbade them from being pleased with sins, disobedience and performing abominations.

It came (reported) on the authority of Ali who said: one day Allah's Messenger ﷺ was sitting with a stick in his hand and he was scratching the ground. He raised his head and said: There is not one amongst you who has not been allotted his seat in Paradise or Hell. They said: Allah's Messenger, then, why should we perform good deeds, why not depend upon our destiny? Thereupon he said. No, do perform good deeds, for everyone is facilitated in that for which he has been created; then he recited this verse: "Then, who gives to the needy and guards against evil and accepts the excellent (the truth of Islam and the path of righteousness it prescribes), We shall make easy for him the easy end..."[61]

Narrated by Muslim

If it was said: Allah the Exalted has written upon His servants (to perform) disobedience, so are they forced to do it?

[61] Quran 92:5-7

We say: Allah the Exalted eternally knew what they will do before creating them, then Allah the Exalted gave His servants a will, ability, and volition. The evidence for that is His, the exalted, statement:

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَىٰهَا

Then we showed it (the soul) what's wrong for it and what's right for it. (Quran 91:8)

Question 30: Allah the Exalted has mentioned *Raqeeb* and *'Ateed*; who are they?

Answer: *A-Raqeeb* and *Al-'Ateed* are two angels delegated to the servant. It is obligatory to believe in them and attestation that they preserve and keep record of what he does.

They do not leave the servant and (remain with him) in all situations and places whether disliked places like bathrooms and the state of having intercourse by the evidence of the statement of the Prophet ﷺ: Beware of nakedness! For indeed there are with you, those who do not part from you except at the place of defecation, and when a man goes into his wife. So be shy of them and honor them. (Narrated by a-Tirmidhi)

Question 31: What is the ruling of believing in *A-Raqeeb* and *Al-'Ateed*?

Answer: It is obligatory to believe in *A-Raqeeb* and *Al-'Ateed*.

Because of the statement of Allah, the Exalted:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِۦ نَفْسُهُۥ ۖ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ ٱلْوَرِيدِ إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى ٱلْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ ٱلْيَمِينِ
وَعَنِ ٱلشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ مَّا يَلْفِظُ مِن قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

And indeed, We have created man, and We know what his self-whispers to him. And We are nearer to him than his jugular vein. (Remember) that the two receivers (recording angels) receive (each human being), one sitting on the right and one on the left. Not a word does he (or she) utter but there is a watcher by him ready (to record it). (Quran 50:16-18)

Section on the ruling of believing in the *a-Sam'iaat* (that which is not known through logical deduction)

Question 32: What is the ruling on believing in the Hour and its signs?

Answer: It is obligatory believe in in the Hour and its signs.

The evidence for that is the statement of Allah the Exalted:

ٱقْتَرَبَتِ ٱلسَّاعَةُ

The Hour has drawn near. (Quran 54:1)

And His statement, Glorified is He:

يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلسَّاعَةِ

They ask you about the Hour (Day of Resurrection). (Quran 7:187)

And the hadith of Abu Huraira RA:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم كَانَ يَوْمًا بَارِزًا لِلنَّاسِ إِذْ أَتَاهُ رَجُلٌ يَمْشِي فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الإِيمَانُ قَالَ " الإِيمَانُ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلاَئِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلِقَائِهِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْبَعْثِ الآخِرِ ". قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الإِسْلاَمُ قَالَ " الإِسْلاَمُ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلاَ تُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا، وَتُقِيمَ الصَّلاَةَ، وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ الْمَفْرُوضَةَ، وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ ". قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَا الإِحْسَانُ قَالَ " الإِحْسَانُ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ، فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ ". قَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَتَى السَّاعَةُ قَالَ " مَا الْمَسْئُولُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ السَّائِلِ، وَلَكِنْ سَأُحَدِّثُكَ عَنْ أَشْرَاطِهَا إِذَا وَلَدَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ رَبَّتَهَا، فَذَاكَ مِنْ أَشْرَاطِهَا، وَإِذَا كَانَ الْحُفَاةُ الْعُرَاةُ رُءُوسَ النَّاسِ فَذَاكَ مِنْ أَشْرَاطِهَا فِي خَمْسٍ لا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ {إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الأَرْحَامِ} ". ثُمَّ انْصَرَفَ الرَّجُلُ فَقَالَ " رُدُّوا عَلَىَّ ". فَأَخَذُوا لِيَرُدُّوا فَلَمْ يَرَوْا شَيْئًا. فَقَالَ " هَذَا جِبْرِيلُ جَاءَ لِيُعَلِّمَ النَّاسَ دِينَهُمْ ".

One day while Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was sitting with the people, a man came to him walking and said, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). What is Belief?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Belief is to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Apostles, and the meeting with Him, and to believe in the Resurrection." The man asked, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) What is Islam?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "Islam is to worship Allah and not worship anything besides Him, to offer prayers perfectly, to pay the (compulsory) charity i.e. Zakat and to fast the month of Ramadan." The man again asked, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) What is Ihsan (i.e. perfection or Benevolence)?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Ihsan is to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you do not achieve this state of devotion, then (take it for granted that) Allah sees you." The man further asked, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) When will the Hour be established?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "The one who is asked about it does not know more than the questioner does, but I will describe to you its portents. When the lady slave gives birth to her mistress, that will be of its portents; when the bare-footed naked people become the chiefs of the people, that will be of its portents. The Hour is one of five things which nobody knows except Allah. Verily, the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah (alone). He

sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs." (31.34) Then the man left. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Call him back to me." They went to call him back but could not see him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "That was Gabriel who came to teach the people their religion."

Narrated by al-Bukhari

Of the signs of the Hour are: the appearance of the *Dajjal* and *Yajooj* and *Majooj*, the descension of Issa, and the like of that. (We should also believe in) *a-Sa'qa*,[62] the Gathering, the Resurrection of every soul, and other (similar things) than that (what was mentioned).

Question 33: What is the ruling of believing in Paradise al-Janna and the hellfire and that they are everlasting?

Answer: Paradise al-Janna and the hellfire are real, they are both created now, and they were created to remain forever. (We believe that) *al-Maqam al-Mahmood*[63] and *al-Hawdh al-Mawrood*[64] are real.

[62] The blast- see Quran 39:68
[63] The praised station of intercession of the Prophet ﷺ.
[64] The lake for the believers on the Day of Resurrection.

Section on what is obligatory upon a Muslim

Question 34: What is obligatory upon the Muslim's toward the scholars of Ahl a-Sunna wal-Jama'a?

Answer: It is obligatory upon the Muslim to revere the scholars and respect them even he disagrees with them.

Its evidence is the statement of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " إِنَّ مِنْ إِجْلاَلِ اللَّهِ إِكْرَامَ ذِي الشَّيْبَةِ الْمُسْلِمِ وَحَامِلِ الْقُرْآنِ غَيْرِ الْغَالِي فِيهِ وَالْجَافِي عَنْهُ وَإِكْرَامَ ذِي السُّلْطَانِ الْمُقْسِطِ " .

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Glorifying Allah involves showing honor to a grey-haired Muslim and to one who can expound the Qur'an, but not to one who acts extravagantly regarding it, or turns away from it, and showing honor to a just ruler.

Question 35: Who are Ahl a-Sunna wal-Jama'a?

Answer: They are *al-Athariyya al-Hanabila*, *al-Asha'riyya* and *al-Muturidiyya*.[65]

Question 36: What are the rights of a Muslim upon a Muslim?

Answer: A Muslim has rights over a Muslim that must be fulfilled, which are: to conceal his faults, forgive his mistakes, have mercy on his sadness, help him overcome his stumbles, accept his excuse, defend him if he is backbitten, constantly advise him, protect his friendship, faithfully look after him, accept his invitation, accept his gift, reward his friendship, thank his kindness, give him the best support, meet his need, intercede in his problem, reply (with supplication to) his sneezing, return to him what he has lost, stand with him, do not show enmity to him, help him against his oppressor, stop him from wronging others, don't surrender him, don't let him down, want for him what he desires for himself, and dislike for him what he dislikes for himself. That was mentioned in *a-Ri'aya*.

Question 37: What is upon a Muslim (layperson) regarding issuing legal rulings such as *a-takfeer* (disbelief)?

[65] The *Hanabaliyya* follow the way of Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal radhi Allahu 'anhu (d. 241 Hijri) which id the way of the Selef and they're also known as the *Athariyya* or people of the tradition. The *Ashariyya* and *Maturidiyya* ascribe themselves to the Imams Abu al-Hassan Al-Ashari (d. 324 Hijri) and Abu Mansur al-Maturidi (d. 333 Hijri) who themselves ascribe to the core beliefs of the Hanbalis and Atharis with the main divergence of the latter two with the Hanbalis/Atharis over the permissibility to do *ta'weel*, or speculative interpretation, of the Divine attributes.

Answer: It is not permissible for the Muslim to issue these rulings because they are specific to *al-mujtahid* (a legal authority who is able to deduce legal rulings and judgements) and he who declares a Muslim as an unbeliever has become an unbeliever.

The evidence for that is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

وَمَنْ رَمَى مُؤْمِنًا بِكُفْرٍ فَهْوَ كَقَتْلِهِ

And whoever accuses a believer of disbelief, then it is as if he had killed him.

Narrated by al-Bukhari

And in another hadith, the Messenger ﷺ said:

إِذَا قَالَ الرَّجُلُ لأَخِيهِ يَا كَافِرُ فَقَدْ بَاءَ بِهِ أَحَدُهُمَا

If a man says to his brother, O Kafir (disbeliever)!' Then surely one of them is such (i.e., a Kafir).

Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim (this is the wording of al-Bukhari)

Question 38: What is the ruling of debating over the attributes of Allah the Exalted?

Answer: It is not permissible for him to quarrel with anyone, nor debate with him, nor learn to argue, for speaking about predestination, the beatific vision, the Qur'an and other than it from the Sunna is disliked and forbidden, he should not do it, even if he is correct, the one who argues and debates (in these matters) is not from Ahl a-Sunna wal-Jama'a, until he abandons arguing and believes in the traditions.

Allah is *al-'Ala*[66] and *al-'Alam*[67]

All praise belongs to Allah the Lord of the worlds, and may Allah send prayers and peace upon our Master Muhammad and his people and send peace extensively.

[66] This has the literal meaning of the "Most High."
[67] This has the literal meaning of the "All Knowing."